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Address:

DELIVERED AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE SETTLEMENT OF

BRECKINRIDGE COUNTY,

ON THE SITE OF

HARDIN'S OLD FORT, NEAR HARDINSBURG,

NOVEMBER 2D, 1882.

By WM. C. P. BRECKINRIDGE.

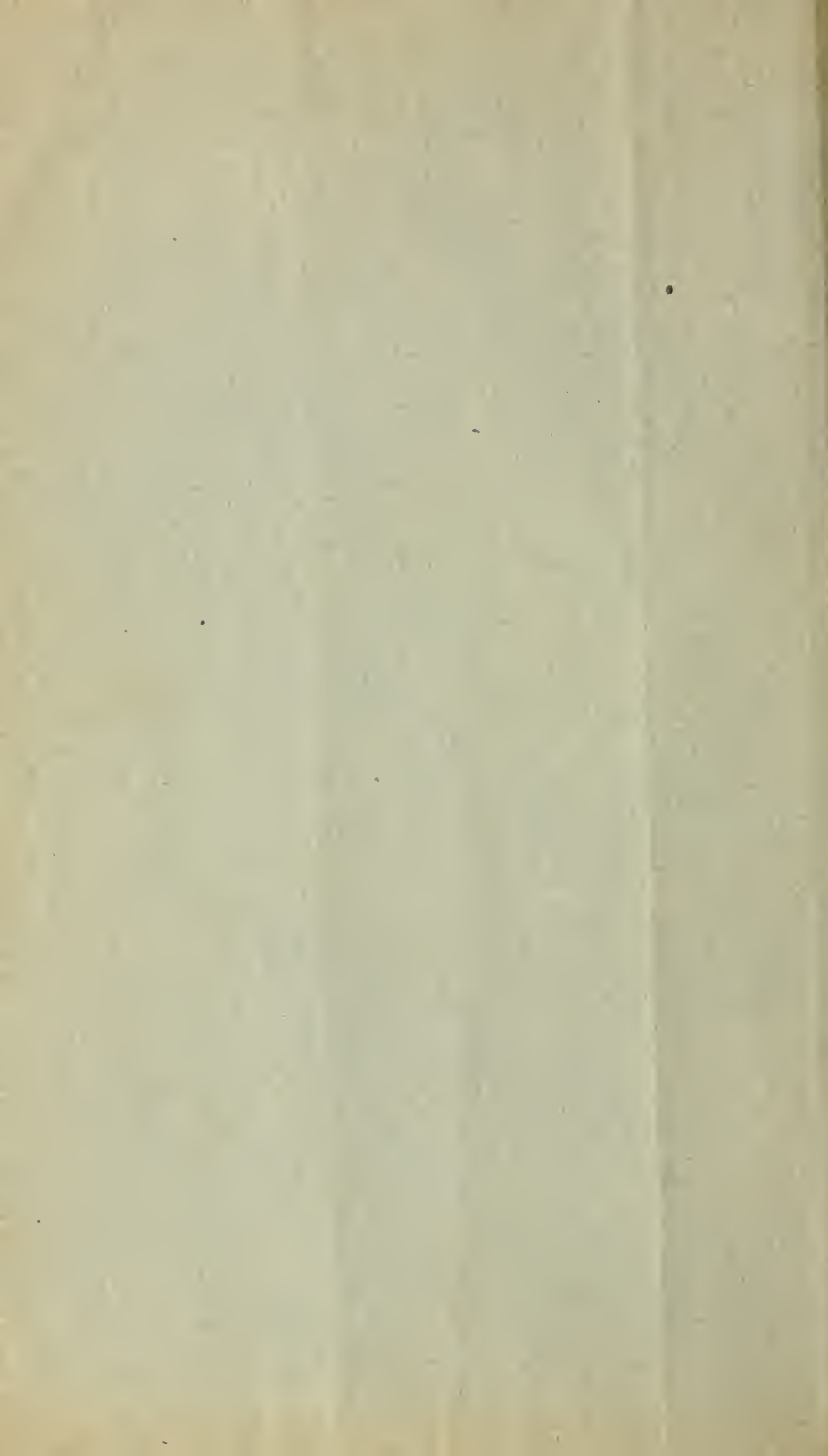
Published at the request of the Breckinridge Centennial Society.

FRANKFORT, KY.:

PRINTED AT THE KENTUCKY YEOMAN OFFICE.

MAJOR, JOHNSTON & BARRETT.

1882.



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MAJOR, JOHNSTON & BARRETT.

1882.

I beseech you, sir, to reflect on the delicate situation of our Constitution. It is but the child of yesterday. Let us not expose it to attacks which its immatured powers may not be able to repel. But young as the Constitution is, it hath wrought miracles. It hath made happy, men from all quarters of the world. Its youth and its merits jointly urge it upon us to touch it with a delicate hand. To preserve it with sacred solicitude is unquestionably the duty of every man who values liberty and property.

* * * * *

For my own part, sir, I never cast my eyes over my country; I never contemplate our beautiful political fabric, but I become animated by the prospect, and triumph in the advantages I possess in common with all my fellow-citizens, and a degree of transport is mingled with my emotions when I consider that my lot is cast in one of the happiest spots, and under one of the best Constitutions in the whole world.

JOHN BRECKINRIDGE.

JANUARY 31, 1798.

I had no thought, my countrymen, of being called before you again after so long an interval; and it is, if possible, still less likely that I shall ever again take part in one of your popular assemblies. If God had so willed, it had been my happiness to have lived and labored amongst you, to have mingled my dust with yours, and to have cast the lot of my children in the same heritage with yours. Wherever I live or wherever I die, I shall live and die a true Kentuckian. With me the first of all appellations is Christian, after that Gentleman, and then Kentuckian.

ROBERT J. PRECKINRIDGE.

The whole earth may rejoice that one of her continents abides in freedom mightier than ever; and the inhabitants of the earth who sigh for deliverance may exult as they turn their longing eyes towards the invincible land where the free dwell and are safe. We, as our delivered country starts in her new career, wiser, freer, more powerful than before; we, fearing God and fearing nothing else, must consecrate ourselves afresh to our higher destiny. Peace, and not force, is the true instrument of our mission in the world: instruction, not oppression; example, not violence and conquest, our way to bless the human race. But force and violence and conquest are words which the nations must not utter to us any more; are things which they must learn to use at all with great moderation; and wrongfully no more at all in the track where our duties make us responsible for conniving at their crimes. We must accept our destiny in all its fullness; and run our great career with perfect rectitude and majestic strength.

It is God who calls us to be great, in all that distinguishes the race which He has made in His own image. It is God who requires us to do great things for a world which He so loved that He gave His only begotten Son that it might not perish.

ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE.

And now, Senators, we leave this memorable chamber bearing with us unimpaired the Constitution we received from our forefathers. Let us cherish it with grateful acknowledgment to the Divine Power who controls the destinies of empires, and whose goodness we adore. The structures reared by men yield to the corroding tooth of time. These marble walls must moulder into dust; but the principles of constitutional liberty, guarded by wisdom and virtue, unlike material elements, do not decay. Let us devoutly trust that another Senate, in another age, shall bear to a new and larger chamber this Constitution vigorous and inviolate, and that the last generation of posterity shall witness the deliberations of the Representatives of American States still united, prosperous, and free.

JOHN C. BRECKINRIDGE.

ADDRESS.

These letters,* my countrymen, just read in your hearing, furnish evidence of the love felt in many hearts for this dear old county. In the library of the eloquent Holt; in the office where Green conducts with consummate skill the affairs of the great company, whose chief capital is the harnessed lightning of the clouds; in the Executive Mansion of the lusty giant of the West, the powerful young Missouri, where Crittenden adds dignity to an honored Kentucky name; in the more remote Salt Lake City, where Murray, whose spurs were won in boyhood, strives with gallant zeal to perform troublesome duties; in office and shop, in field and highway, by the side of glowing hearthstones and in every clime, these exquisite scenes on which our eyes feast are rising before the loving eyes of the scattered children of Breckinridge county; sweet memories of childhood are surging through their hearts. The precious graves of the unforgotten dead, covered in the beautiful brown of a lovely autumn, rise unbidden between their work and them, and prayers for you and yours ascend this November day to Him from whom all mercies flow.

And we respond with proud and loving hearts and eyes bedimmed with tears, whose mingled sources are our pride for all they have accomplished, and grief at the absence of their beloved faces; "God this day bless every son and daughter of this common mother; in the home of every such child may peace and happiness abide; may the day of honest toil be followed by the night of sweet repose until night is swallowed up in eternal day."

* Immediately before the Address letters from absent sons of Breckinridge county were read.

As we unroll the map of our country and gain some conception of our heritage; as we ponder over the lengthened columns of our last census, and the figures become instinct with life and turn into freemen, cities, States, and all that give power and comfort thereto; our pride is sanctified by gratitude to the Fathers, who secured this heritage and made possible this result.

As we view the consummation of a century, and looking around us on this fruitful and free land, with its millions of people, its aggregate wealth, its happy homes, its peaceful and free States, its powerful and successful general government, yet in its youth honored abroad, the hope of the generations and the bulwark of freedom, we gain some conception both of the hopes of those fathers and their wisdom. This is no accident. There are no accidents in the economy of God; there is no luck in the divine providence which inspires the inevitable progression of cause and effect. All the Present is held in the bosom of the Past: the Future is the fruit of that Present and Past. We cannot foresee *all* that may be produced by our act; we cannot estimate the entire force of the influences we put in motion; the modifying power of other agencies cannot be ascertained; yet the outcome is, in its nature, the harvest due to the seed sown. He who sows good seed in good ground, with honest and intelligent toil, may confidently expect to reap a fruitful harvest; nay more: even "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy; he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves."

To-day the Alleghany Mountains mark no line of division: from the Lakes to the Gulf there are only prosperous and united communities; the Mississippi flows in majestic power, twining together in indissoluble bonds the imperial States nestled in its surpassing Valley; the mountain ranges of the West have opened their bosoms to our advancing power, and the Pacific ocean guards with glad and placid vigilance

the industrious toilers who are building new empires on its shores. Within these wide boundaries thirty-eight States have been solving the intricate problem of American Liberty: the problem of duplex government—of two races—and, with God's blessing, have become powerful, rich, and contented. The benign influences of religion, the pervasive power of education, the sweet leadership of liberty, have united with all the kindly agencies of a beneficent nature, fertile soil, salubrious climate, exhaustless mineral resources, numerous rivers, to give to the favored land every blessing. Well might the fathers say, "*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*"

For this was not always so. When Boone on June 7, 1769, feasted his eyes with "the unrivaled valley of the Kentucky," what a contrast the picture of to-day would have been by the side of the picture of that day. If painter, poet, or orator could in fitting color or apt word produce these two portraits—paint America as she was in 1769 and as she is to-day—it would stagger human credulity to realize that they represent the same country, with an interval of only one hundred and twelve years. And if some great thinker would with equal power set before us the political (I use the word in its noble signification) surroundings of those people with those of our country to-day, the transformation would be as astounding as is the physical and material transformation. The germs of each existed; the possibilities of each were in existence; the "precious seed" for all these harvests were in our fathers' possession, and, even if sown in tears, they were sown with true intelligence, and with brave confidence in the result.

In the thin fringe of settlements on the Atlantic coast were held in its very nature the capability and necessity of future growth, and these settlements were themselves the growth of this peculiar characteristic. There is something in that great race, or that family of races which speak the English language, which necessitates expansion, growth,

development, in lines peculiar to itself. This race seems to have instinctively the quality to found empires, form organized societies, construct States. Social order, governmental forms, administrative justice according to orderly methods, accompany all emigrants of this race, all adventurers of this blood. Wherever there be a camp, where the sun is greeted in this tongue, there is order, and the capacity of immediate self-government, and the prompt administration of justice according to some fair and impartial procedure. But this peculiarity had been of slow growth through the long centuries, and it struggled upward to strength and domination amid much darkness. Blood and pain and broken hearts had been the price paid for the exercise of the power in free and untrammelled will.

Along the Atlantic the colonists found homes, and under charters from kings began the development of a new power in this virgin continent.

Not like Aphrodite did this glorious mistress rise from the wave into the full radiance of unearthly beauty; not like Minerva did she spring into being, the perfect form of adorned and ravishing wisdom. Through many years of colonial labor, by the power of many diverse, and, on the surface, conflicting agencies, grew into some tangible shape this idol of the West.

There is an exquisite figure in the Apostolic epistle of the Temple of God, the stones of which, builded and compacted together, are the blood bought souls for whom Christ died.

It is not irreverent to adopt and apply the allegory. The stones for our temple, like those of Solomon, were being hewn out of the quarry, being also "lively stones." In this new world, guarded as it had been by the fogs of the sentry oceans and the denser fogs of human ignorance, the slow and bitter fight against the forests of nature, the Indian, the traditions of tyranny and the legal claims of English domination, had reached that critical moment when all the

Colonies must unite all their forces, or the battle was lost. Thirteen Colonies had taken root. The colonists had become acclimated in the highest and broadest sense of that word. They had become countrymen of each other in the holy sense of that ennobling thought: sons of a common land, brothers sprung from a common womb, joint heirs of a common heritage. That heritage was not only of hill and dale, of mountain fastness and outreaching prairie, of the rushing river and the shore on which crawled the creeping ocean tide, but was of the chartered rights and the traditional liberties of English colonists and the inalienable freedom of men. All that belonged to men as men, all that was the birthright of Englishmen, and all the added rights of American colonists, formed part of this common weal. The fierce foes of the forests—nay, the forests themselves—were enough to appal any but the stoutest heart. The contests with the French had added to the dangers of the long probationary struggle.

And it was indeed a sad fate which brought these weak thirteen Colonies face to face with that dread alternative—submission to civil and political serfdom, or the unknown contingencies of such a struggle. Our fathers were clear-sighted and wise, as well as brave and free. They saw the immense dangers of success, as well as the great evils of a most possible defeat. They realized the immense difficulties that success would bring, and the sad consequences which defeat would entail. It was in no blind, haphazard passion, no thoughtless, dare-devil recklessness, that our Revolutionary sires met these appalling duties.

They knew that if the Colonies secured independence from English domination, the dangers and difficulties to be met and surmounted were of the very gravest and most alarming nature, and were of every possible kind—physical, political, financial. The entire population of the thirteen Colonies was less than three million, scattered from the frozen edge of Canada to where the magnolia fills the night with fra-

grance and the nightingale the air with song. These settlements were scattered thinly along this long coast by the banks of the rivers—a mere skein of population.

The boundless continent behind held the implacable Indian, who had been driven slowly back by the combined power of colonist and British. The Spaniard and French had foothold on the Gulf and on the Pacific, holding the mouth of the Mississippi, and a ready ally to the Indian. So that the narrow strip between the Appalachian range and the sea was all that would, in fact, constitute the United States of America when success made them free. Impoverished by such a war as would follow; with no accumulated wealth; with so sparse a population; with the British in Canada, the Indian behind them, the Spaniard and French holding Florida, the Gulf, and the Mississippi, national existence, much less national expansion, seemed indeed almost hopeless; and the political difficulties added to the dark forecastings. It was not one Colony, homogeneous and unique. The political factors were thirteen, with different charters, with diverse traditions, with diverse interests, and every possible jealousy that can be generated in human breasts; and all history told how fierce and cruel and unreasoning these jealousies could be. Grecian Leagues, Italian Confederacies, German Federations, had been constant causes of fraternal strife and savage massacre. Why should not Virginia hate as Sparta hated, or Massachusetts make terms with a foreign foe against her sisters, as heroic but misguided patriots had often done? Some of the wisest saw another cloud, then no larger than a man's hand, on the horizon—the cloud of African slavery—and foretold the storm which would thence fall.

It was clear to our far-sighted sires that in the end success required the conquest of the continent; that the subtle force which would give us life would not be confined within these narrow limits. Nay! that our existence would depend on that expansion. War with Great Britain meant far more

than that mere war. It was the beginning of a policy which had for its object national independence, founded on the union of sovereign States, into which was to be brought the continent.

It was a sublime conception in its magnificent outline as in its great details, and we this day are witnesses that these seers of old were not mere dreamers of dreams.

One of the most eloquent of modern divines has drawn a graphic picture of St. Paul passing over from Asia to the conquest of Europe; of the insignificance of the apparent force for the accomplishment of the proposed end; of the cultured Greek, the mighty Roman, the nomadic tribes of the Black Forest, the fierce Celt and mystic Druid, to be transformed as well as conquered by this Jewish servant of a crucified Master; and then, as companion picture, the great preacher drew Christian Europe in her glory, her might, and her triumphs. Such are the triumphs of truth—such the victories of moral forces. And the heroic lovers of truth, who can look beyond the day of their labors to the morrow of their triumph are the true leaders of the world's progress, even though they seem to die defeated or live the objects of derision. To some it is given to live to enjoy the first fruits of their toils, and to see the certainty of the end of their labors. Time gives to these favored ones the indorsement of its approval, while immortality waits to bestow its crown. It is in honor of such men that we hold these memorial exercises; to recount once more their services; tell over their romantic and stirring deeds; reproduce the dense wilderness and tangled underbrush, and repeople them with savage beast and more savage red-man; clothe again this fair land with virgin verdure, and have our hearts stirred with tale of ambush, woe, and danger; listen with new and breathless eagerness to story of sacrifice, pain, and endurance; to the never old story of daring men and heroic women, building loving, even if rude, log-cabin homes, and laying the foundations of a new State.

It is, indeed, an enchanting story of human skill and fortitude, of brave endeavor and crafty maneuver, of relentless attack and fierce retort, of ceaseless vigilance and endless danger—all mellowed by the golden sheen of wifely love and womanly devotion, and glorified by the noble destinies involved.

It has been told over and over to unwearied ears. It has never lost its fresh attraction and never will.

I have chosen a theme less attractive than the deeds of war and scout. I have come to draw other pictures than the fierce contests in brake and forest between Boone and Kenton and Logan and Hardin and Todd and their comrades, and the brave and skillful though cruel Indian. To other and more eloquent tongues I resign this delightful labor.

The task allotted to me is to re-state somewhat of the debt that good order and free government owe to these brave fighters of the forest, who were builders more than warriors, and that which they builded were STATES. Like those who re-built Jerusalem after the captivity, they were warriors only because they could not otherwise build. Wall and city and temple must be builded, even if they which builded on the wall, and they that bore burdens with those that laded, every one had with one of his hands to labor, and with the other hold a weapon. It is as builders that I desire this day to honor these fathers, and as we renew our love for that edifice, whose foundations they laid, we give new utterance to our grateful admiration of them.

The American Revolution did not open suddenly nor unexpectedly. The beginnings of that revolt were years before, and the mutterings of the storm were heard by thoughtful observers long before the cloud appeared on the horizon. As early as 1763 the King desired to limit the growth of the Colonies west of the Alleghanies, and to confine the increase to the narrow scope between the mountain range and the sea-coast, most of which was accessible

by navigable rivers, and all of which could be controlled from the sea-coast and those rivers.

In that year, a royal proclamation expressly forbade the granting warrants of survey or passing patents for any land beyond the heads or sources of any of the rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the west or southwest.

It was in defiance of this royal edict that Kentucky was settled. She is the only State whose very existence was in express disobedience to all governmental authority; and as the mother island and the refractory Colonies become more in earnest in the long preliminary dispute that preceded the actual clash of arms, adventurous hunters and daring surveyors made Kentucky known as the most abundant of hunting fields and the most fertile of lands—a country alike inviting to the hunter and farmer—a land flowing with milk and honey, charming to the eye, and rich to the ear. In 1774, while the Old Bay Colony was preparing for Bunker Hill, and Henry was thundering in Williamsburg, and Franklin was urging a hesitating Colony, and the conflict was at hand, a house was built in this beautiful land—only a log-cabin it was—yet it consecrated all the State to that Anglo-Saxon civilization which founds the State on the family, and it was evidence that the adventurers were settlers. True, as yet no woman had come to occupy this home; but it was built for women to inhabit. And after the Continental Congress had convened, and Bunker Hill given bloody proof that American militiamen could die for liberty, and Washington was at the head of the Continental army, the families of Boone and other pioneers immigrated here, and the corner-stone of the new State was placed in its proper position. In defiance of royal proclamation, and amid the first days of the new era of national independence, in the exquisite valley of the Kentucky, began the infant life of the first born of American liberty and American institutions. Her birth was coeval with that of the New Republic, and her history covers the life-time of that Republic.

While the territory was part of Virginia, and these few stations and forts were the frontier settlements of that State, and in that sense were under the protection of her laws, and subject to her authorities, yet practically they were wholly beyond any protection or obedience. The distance and the dangers alike made every station a community to itself, and united all the stations in mutual support and defense. These pioneers belonged to a race who knew and instinctively obeyed the laws of order, and organized society and military subordination, and the habit of submission to law, made law and order reign in this new community. The liberty of our ancestors was never lawlessness. However illiterate, according to the learning of the schools, these hunters may have been, they were learned in the important lesson that order is the first great law, and submission to authority the first necessity for freemen; and during those long years of revolution and war, when civil courts might well be powerless, and every man might have temptation to be a law unto himself, there was entire obedience to law and constituted authority.

In the very midst of the Revolutionary War, when every nerve was being strained, and every resource was drained, the expansive power, residing in all great eras, and in all great influences, found itself able to increase the strength of these frontier settlements; and in October of 1776, the State of Virginia, Patrick Henry being Governor, found time to create a county, and give it the name of Kentucky, whose territorial limits were those which now include this State.

This was probably the result of the influence of George Rogers Clark, than whom few Americans deserve better of their country, and to whose sagacity, military genius, and statesmanlike foresight we owe, in large part, the successful preservation of that superb territory out of which Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin were carved; and to him is ascribed the first intimation that the situation

of Kentucky was such that she was needed by Virginia as much as she needed Virginia, and that as an independent State she had a future worth taking many risks for. He, more clearly, perhaps, than any of his compeers, saw the necessity of destroying the Indian power north of the Ohio river, and of acquiring the right of the free navigation of the Mississippi; and that a State so fertile, free from any other burdens than its own exigencies, would attract hardy and enterprising adventurers by promise of tracts of virgin soil, and the fascinating power of dangerous enterprises. He foresaw the greatness of that wide West which stretched from the western foot-hills of the Virginia mountains across the great river, and that at the head of such a country Kentucky might have a grand future. He, too, with his broad forecast, must have foreseen that it would be destructive to Virginia to hem her in between mountain and sea.

How far he opened these views to the assembled pioneers at Harrodsburg that sent him and Gabriel Jones to Richmond as delegates to the State authorities, is a matter of doubt. That he unfolded them to the Governor of Virginia, the prophetic Henry, to whom, as yet, history has not given his true place, and who was as sagacious as a statesman as he was eloquent as an orator, is beyond doubt; and that wise magistrate immediately entered into the plans of Clark to afford Kentucky all the fostering and protecting aid possible in the midst of those revolutionary dangers. The first aid were military stores and proper commissions; the next, the protection of civil government and the presence of legally authorized magistrates; so that civil government and military organization followed Clark's visit to Virginia. The views of Clark and Henry were communicated to, and shared by, Jefferson, who, when Governor, exerted himself to the utmost to prepare the way for the ultimate extension of our western boundary to the Pacific slope. As early as 1778 Jefferson ordered possession to be taken of the bank of the Mississippi river, and a fort built thereon; and in 1780 Clark obeyed this order.

This act and the military successes of Clark, in all probability, prevented the success of the intrigue of the Spanish and French courts in 1780 to take advantage of the condition of the United States, and obtain a pledge to limit the States to the territory east of the Alleghanies, and give to Spain the territory south of the Ohio. This would have resulted, necessarily, in securing to Great Britain the territory north of the Ohio. If this plan had been successful, the destiny of America would indeed have been altered beyond our ability to conjecture. If Spain had held all west of the Mississippi, and on the east thereof, all south of Ohio, including Kentucky, part of Tennessee, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, and Great Britain had retained the Canadas, and that fertile empire bounded on the south by the Ohio, and on the west by the Mississippi, what would the century have produced? Some knowledge of these intrigues was possessed by the leading men in Kentucky, but they were not generally known, and ignorant of this danger, year by year new families join those who had found their way across the blue mountains and through the wilderness until Virginia, staggering under the dreadful burden of the lengthened war, yet mindful somewhat of these far off sons, divided the county of Kentucky into three counties, and blotted this Indian name from the map and from political association. Other counties of Virginia had thus been divided, and their names never restored, and, so far as I know, this is the only instance of the obliteration and restoration of a political name to the same territorial division; and from 1780 to 1783 there was no Kentucky; yet the name constantly appears in all the contemporaneous writings; and in popular speech and general talk it is called Kentucky, and in 1783 the name was restored, and the counties of Fayette, Jefferson, and Lincoln united into the District of Kentucky, and this district is given a district court, with all common law, chancery, and criminal jurisdiction.

Peace was declared, independence had been recognized, and the armies of the Revolution were disbanded, and many of its tried veterans sought a new home in this new land—soldiers of liberty, who had won a country by their valor, sought now to win a home where that liberty could be enjoyed. The league formed by the Indian tribes to crush the infant settlements had been frustrated; but the danger of invasion was not yet ended. So long as the power of the Northwestern tribes was not broken, Kentucky was in constant danger, and rapid increase improbable.

To the dangers of invasion from the Northern Indians was added the startling rumor of a threatened attack from the Indians of the South. The organization of the District was purely judicial; the military power was in the hands of the militia officers of the three counties, and there was no common head, and no executive power nearer than Richmond. There was immediate need of mutual protection, and some common authority near at hand. Out of this necessity action sprang. As is the case with our English-speaking race, the action was prompt, but orderly. Col. Logan, second in military reputation only to Gen. Clark, and not second to him in weight of character and in the affections and confidence of the people of the District, summoned the leading citizens, all of whom had been soldiers, to meet in Danville, "to consult as to what measures should be taken for the common defense."

It was a notable meeting—called not in violation of law, not for revolution, but to supply by voluntary effort and organization the absence of that needed executive power which every community must exercise, and which must be so placed as to render it available at a moment's notice. Every one in that council had been a soldier of freedom, and was thoroughly learned in all the principles involved in the late struggle. Most of them were by blood and rearing Virginians. The gravity of their condition forced them to the conclusion that they must have a government inde-

pendent of Virginia. It will be remembered that this was before the adoption of the Federal Constitution—before the gift by Virginia of the Northwest to the General Government. Up to this period, no State had organized itself. All the States had been Colonies, formed under and by virtue of charters which created executive, legislative, and judicial offices, and these Colonies had passed from Colonial to State existence by the declaration of the Legislatures created by these charters. No State had been carved out of a State.

The experiment of the organization of an independent State to remain a part of the confederation had never been made. This problem met this assembly—an assembly without legal authority. These men were absolute believers in the two fundamental principles of the American conception of liberty, to-wit: that all men were free, and that governments rested on the consent of the governed.

To make these efficient, it followed that in every body of freemen rested inalienably the right of free assemblage and orderly organization to ascertain and make potent the will of the governed. This these men proceeded to do. They recommended that each militia company should, on a fixed day, elect one delegate to meet in Danville on December 27, 1784.

The militia company was selected, doubtless, because it was easily assembled; it was a legally constituted body, and in them were enrolled all the men of the District. The courageous and thoughtful Logan, therefore, put into motion that movement which ended in the admission of Kentucky as a State. But from 1784 to 1792 very much patience was needed, and some important contributions to political science were made.

The convention elected by these companies met, and after grave and earnest debate, came to the resolution that the proper steps ought to be taken to obtain an act to render Kentucky independent of Virginia; but the first step in this

was to ascertain the will and obtain the consent of the people, and to do this, this convention recommended the election of delegates to another convention, the members to which convention should be elected by the three counties on the principles of *equal representation, i. e., of numbers*. This seems to us so just and so simple as to excite no remark. Yet it was a wide departure from all English and Virginia custom, and a long step in advance toward popular government. Borough representation—representation based on wealth, or on intelligence, or on favoritism, but never on numbers—had been long known and enjoyed.

The mere idea of representation in government contains in germ the entire conception of a free representative government. So soon as he who makes the laws does so by virtue of a delegated power—as the representative of a constituency—speaking in the name of others, the germinal conception of a free government has taken form; and time and fortunate circumstance may develop it into perfection.

But in that day it is indeed remarkable that these backwoodsmen—these pioneer hunters in hunting shirts—should have seen so clearly the true pathway before them and their State, and from the beginning settled every question on the broadest basis, on the securest principles, weaving no bonds to be loosened. From that day Kentucky has adhered to this broad principle—that representation shall be equal—based on the number of her free population. Virginia has followed the example thus set her by her daughter; and the fierce contests concerning parliamentary representation reveal how far in advance our sires were.

Another great stride was, that no qualification except manhood was affixed to the right of suffrage.

If possible, this was a greater departure from the traditions these men brought from Virginia. In all America there was no State that did not require a property qualification. All men were free undoubtedly, but all men were not voters. "The elective franchise" was, in a certain sense, a gift. Some had to possess it. Those who did, represented

the whole body of her people, but to what classes this privilege should be accorded was held to be a matter of choice, to be determined by constitutional provision or legislative action. Manhood suffrage was unknown.

In those early days, Kentucky not only blazed the way for all communities to become States, but she gave to American liberty these two great contributions—equal representation and suffrage without property qualification. Man as man was free. When he became citizen he remained free, and entitled to his voice in the elections held to ascertain his will ; and not only to his vote, but that this vote should have equal power with every other vote in every other part of the State. This was the simple but sublime conception these pioneers had of a free citizen and a representative government.

And yet these men, with such radical notions, were conservative and orderly and patient. Kentucky was part of Virginia, and these men owed obedience to her laws, respect to her authorities, confidence in her desire to do justice, and therefore her consent must be asked, and every proper means taken to secure this consent.

In the end, independence—this was determined ; but to accomplish that end only lawful, orderly, and peaceable means were to be employed. The patience of the truly brave is always great ; the free who are brave add dignity to patience. Another year and another Convention ; still another, and the fifth, Convention assembles, and it considers another question—*the navigation of the Mississippi river*.

I have not the space to enter into the details concerning this vexed matter.

It was charged that the Eastern States had voted to surrender the claim to the right of free navigation, and had authorized Mr. Jay to propose to cede this right for a long term of years. It is true that there were good grounds for such a charge ; certainly seven of the Northeastern States had so voted, and Congress did rescind its former instruc-

tion to conclude no treaty without obtaining the free navigation of the Mississippi from its source to its mouth. Rivers were then the great highways of commerce; and the topography and geography of Kentucky rendered her peculiarly dependent on this river. Hemmed in by mountains, separated from the centers of trade and population by hundreds of miles of wilderness, her only hope of market, her only outlet was down this inland sea. All her people saw and felt this. To deprive her of this was to seal up her only hope for wealth and commerce or trade. That this should be done, not only with the consent but by the proposition of the East, and that for the paltry trade of the Mediterranean, caused bitter and angry emotion.

But among her more thoughtful were added higher motives and loftier thoughts. These believed that free institutions could be preserved only by conquering the continent; that the true mission of Kentucky was to push the frontiers northward and westward; that her development was toward the setting sun. To these this free navigation was a means, not an end. It was a step towards the end. It was vital in the broad sweep of this hope. This was not new to these men. The ante-revolutionary statesmen possessed the same broad views; the men of the Revolution shared them; Clark unfolded them to Henry, and to render them possible, Kaskaskia and Vincennes were captured; Jefferson based his hope for the country on their fulfillment.

To these was to be added the ambitious, who saw in the leadership of Kentucky as an independent State, at the head of all the West, field for fame, position, and wealth.

It is not surprising, therefore, that uneasiness took hold of the people; and that to the determination to be independent of Virginia was added the resolve that no power should close this mighty river to their commerce; *and from this resolve grew that series of efforts, that ceaseless agitation, which ended in the purchase and annexation of the Territory of Louisiana.*

I will not trespass on your patience to recount the other successive steps until Kentucky became a member of the Federal Union under the new Constitution. She had waited for eight years. She had seen the Confederation give place to the new government. She had demonstrated that American institutions were sufficient to render the expansion and increase of new States practically without limit. It was her lot to exhibit the process in the slowest, most harassing, and troublesome manner by which a free people can transform themselves into organized States; and that the mode adopted in the Constitution by which new States could be admitted into the Union was a feasible, simple, and peaceable process.

She had, furthermore, contributed to all new States, free from old charters and the trammels of old traditions, that equal representation and manhood suffrage were the true foundation on which to build.

She had prevented the cession of our claim to the free navigation of the Mississippi. And all this had been done by men whose perilous daring had won this land, whose unerring rifles had made Virginia's title to the Northwest good, before whom forests fell, and at whose hands civil government and happy homes arose; men, not many of whom were learned in the learning of the schools, nor known to fame. Brave, sagacious, far seeing men, there is no presence in which they need uncover; no assembly of the world's leaders where they may not sit at ease as among peers; no Pantheon that would not be honored by their presence.

I ought not to omit that, in the very fore front of her Constitution, is another instance of how exact and true was their conception of a free government. All the functions of government can be separated into three great departments, no more and no less: the power to make the law, the power to declare the law, the power to execute the law—the legislative, the judicial, the executive functions. These exhaust governmental functions and powers.

When they are united in one person, and he with power to make, declare, and execute his will as law, and at his pleasure, it is unlimited despotism. If he agree to first make the law, and only execute that, a great gain has been made. If the power to declare the law is taken from him, an immense stride has been made towards protection. If the power to make the law is taken from him, we have the beginning of a free government. Our fathers, in their Constitutions of the original thirteen States, and of the Federal Constitution, following the general example of the British Constitution, separated these great powers and functions, and made the *powers* of these departments separate. George Nicholas and the Convention of Kentucky went one step further, and for the first time in the history of political science, that I am aware of, separated the *persons* as well as the *powers*. We are so accustomed to these simple sentences that we forget how valuable they are, and how necessary to the preservation of pure and free institutions.

Other States have adopted *in ipsissimis verbis* these sections:

ARTICLE I, FIRST KENTUCKY CONSTITUTION.

§ 1. The powers of government shall be divided into three distinct departments, each of them to be confided to a separate body of magistracy, to-wit: those which are legislative to one, those which are executive to another, and those which are judiciary to another.

§ 2. No person, or collection of persons, being of one of these departments, shall exercise any power properly belonging to either of the others, except in the instances hereinafter expressly permitted.

While a few names appear often in these Conventions—George Muter, James Speed, Matthew Walton, Harry Innis, Caleb Wallace, Isaac Cox, Levi Todd—and while conspicuous names—Isaac Shelby, James Garrard, James Wilkinson, Humphrey Marshall, John Brown, Christopher Greenup, Alexander Scott Bullitt, and others—adorn the list of members, only two men were members of all these Conventions—Samuel McDowell and Benjamin Logan. To Logan be-

longs the honor of inaugurating the movement which he lived to see successful, and in which, in every detail, he was an active participant.

Samuel McDowell was called to preside over all these Conventions, and how much Kentucky owes to his resolute and conservative opinions, and to his pure and well balanced character, we may never be able to estimate. He was inclined to be an emancipationist, and leant to the Federal party in his views, as indeed did at first that group of leading men who made Danville their place of meeting, and who belonged to that famous club, whose proceedings have recently been narrated in masterly style by one whose maternal ancestors helped to ordain and establish these Constitutions.

Thomas Todd was the Secretary of every one of these Conventions. Clerkly, prompt, ambitious, capable, his aid was invaluable in these formative times, and though he became Justice of the Supreme Court, he is fast fading into oblivion. Cannot some one, in the pious spirit of Old Mortality, re-cut these names on their crumbling tombstones, and a new Scott breathe the life of genius into their noble and fruitful lives, and reproduce their deeds and words to a State who owes them so much?

The names of Logan and of the Todds have been perpetuated by counties, but no such memorial has been erected by a grateful country to Samuel McDowell.

The men who composed these various Conventions were no common men. They had served under Washington and Greene and Campbell in the campaigns of the East and the South. They had driven the regulars of Great Britain before their resistless charge. They were the heroes of unnumbered dangers in Indian combat — of scout and hunt and skirmish. They had heard Henry in the Raleigh tavern, and met Wythe, Mason, Jefferson at the council board as their equals. In camp and council, in field and wilderness, under starry skies and around the slumbering

camp-fires, they had been trained so that body and brain, heart and soul, were developed to their highest stature.

In the silences of the forests they had communed with God, and sounded the depths of their own souls. In the solitude of the wilderness they had held communion with Nature, and heeded her august and loving teachings. God and Nature and their own hearts had taught them how noble was Man, how paltry the accidental rank.

MEN were these founders of a State—fit brethren to those who have made Plymouth Rock immortal, to those who sat in judgment on a King, and made England a commonwealth, of those who gathered about William the Silent or Martin Luther—grave, patient, heroic, simple, sincere, wise. The arena on which they played their parts was the distant and obscure backwoods of a frontier community. Their numbers were small; there were no great armies, no flaunting banners, no royal commanders, with gay trappings nor stately ceremonials; yet the part they played is immortal, and they played it nobly. They were fit fathers to the State they loved and who now honors them.

But the pioneer work of Kentucky was not ended when she became a State. It will be difficult, if not impossible, for us to estimate correctly the position and condition of Kentucky in June, 1792. Her population was under one hundred thousand. The posts in the Northwest had not been surrendered, and the confederacy formed by the genius of Tecumseh was alert and powerful. Her land titles were complex, doubtful, and embarrassing. She was under a perpetual fear of the closing of the Mississippi.

She was so remote from her sister States and the seat of the Federal Government, as to feel that she received only nominal benefits from her connection with them, and that in important respects her interests were held to be adverse to theirs. The majority of her representatives in the Virginia Convention had voted against the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and the vast majority of her citizens cordially approved this action and shared the grave suspicions of

Henry, and looked with distrust upon the great powers bestowed on the central government.

Without any established financial system, and poor in all this world's goods, save a soil of surpassing fertility; burdened with the oppressive expenses of constant military organization and Indian campaigns which she believed were not carried on with proper vigor, nor in a generous spirit by the Federal authorities, it is not strange that murmurs of discontent were often heard.

The discovery, settlement, defense, and organization of Kentucky were of the precise nature to cultivate the spirit of self-dependence and of careless independence of all exterior authority. In defiance of royal orders had she been settled; almost without assistance had she been conquered to civilization; with reluctant consent, and after the most annoying obstructions, had she been permitted to become an independent State. As her people recalled the steps of her history, they felt that they had won and earned all they had obtained, and in their hearts felt that by themselves, if untrammelled by other exterior authority, they would win all they yet desired.

The influence of Gen. Hamilton and the East in the councils of General Washington was dreaded in Kentucky, and the election of Mr. Adams was received with alarm.

It was in this state of public sentiment that the news of the passage of the Alien and Sedition Laws was received, and instantly Kentucky was ablaze. These bills violated every principle cherished by the statesmen and people of this democratic State. They were based on a theory that really made the powers of the Federal Government unlimited, and gave to the Executive despotic authority.

If they were constitutional, Congress could add to the crimes enumerated in the Constitution as within the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts, and by statute both create an offense and then confounding the broad distinction between the executive and judicial functions, clothe the Presi-

dent with power of arrest and exile. They struck at the freedom of the press, of speech, of public discussion, of popular assemblies, as well as at alien friends. That they were passed at the time and as one of a series of measures when war with France was anticipated, added to the intense opposition felt in Kentucky. Public meetings were held everywhere in the State, and all these measures denounced. The sedate and conservative George Nicholas felt called on to publish an open letter denouncing the acts as unconstitutional, and that this was known to those members of Congress who voted for them, and the President who approved them.

In almost all, if not in all, the resolutions adopted by the public meetings, among the toasts at muster and barbecue, there were united with the denunciation of these acts expressions of resolute purpose to secure the free navigation of the Mississippi; and it seems to have been universally felt in the State that the continuance in power of the Federal party would be followed by the cession of this claim.

Some of the addresses and resolutions, and series of toasts are known to have been written by one who had migrated to Kentucky after she had become a State; and in these appeared a construction of the Federal Constitution, which, if true, gave to Kentucky and each of the States the right to protect her citizens against the operation of an unconstitutional Federal act. And in some of them were sentences which contained the thought that the true mission of the Union was to people the whole Continent, and as speedily as possible carve new States out of the outstretching West, which should be received into the Union on equal footing with the original States; that this was possible only on the theory that these States could protect themselves and their citizens against usurpation by either the General Government or their co-States. That as between these new and at first necessarily weak States, and the General Government and their co-States, the Constitution was the compact of union,

containing all the terms and stipulations of the contract, all the powers granted or to be exercised, all the burdens to be borne ; that the people of these new States could understand from the perusal of this Constitution the precise terms on which they could be received into the Union, and weigh all the duties and contingencies resulting from such a union. But if that Constitution was not the measure of the powers of the General Government and of the co-States, if there resided anywhere unlimited power to add new burdens against the protest of the State, and in open violation of that compact, for which violation the new State had no remedy, except by appeal to the very Government who had committed the violation, then, indeed, would it be folly for these new States to seek a connection where they would be at the unrestrained mercy of distant and at times, perhaps, hostile States, whose numbers and wealth and contiguity to the Capital gave them control of the departments of the Government ; that Kentucky, as a new and comparatively feeble State, on the frontier of that territory out of which other new States were to be carved, was vitally interested in this construction of the Constitution, which, if adopted, would insure beyond doubt the extension of the Union, and remove all danger of the establishment of another Confederacy.

This lawyer and statesman had been the personal friend and neighbor of Jefferson, had served with distinction in the Virginia House of Burgesses, enjoyed the confidence of Madison, and the affectionate friendship of Monroe, and his elder brothers* possessed the respect and esteem of Kentucky. He had been President of the Democratic Society of Lexington, and for awhile Attorney General of Kentucky. Elected to the Legislature from Fayette in May, 1797, he had become interested in legal reform, and in May, 1798, was re-elected. After the Alien and Sedition Laws

* Gen. Robert Breckinridge had sat in some of the Conventions, been a delegate to the Virginia House and was first Speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives.

were passed, he, with his young family, went on a visit to Albemarle among his relatives and friends. He was the friend of the three Nicholas brothers, Wilson Cary, George, and John—all of whom were able and conspicuous members of the Jeffersonian party. During that visit to Albemarle, in a consultation at Monticello, in which Jefferson, Wilson Cary Nicholas, and this Kentuckian were present, the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions of 1798 were substantially agreed upon. Madison drafted those adopted by Virginia. From 1798 to 1821 it was believed that John Breckinridge drafted those Kentucky adopted; in that year Jefferson made the claim that he was their author.*

This is not the time nor place to enter into any discussion of the disputed authorship of these celebrated resolutions. The point I am making is, that Kentucky, by this

* I append a copy of the celebrated letter in which Mr. Jefferson made that claim—copied from the original letter in Mr. Jefferson's peculiar hand-writing, which letter is now in my possession. It is addressed to J. Cabell Breckinridge, Frankfort, Kentucky, is postmarked Charlottesville and has Mr. Jefferson's frank on it.

This letter is published in the correspondence of Mr. Jefferson as "to ——— Nicholas, Esq." Whether the editor of that correspondence followed an indorsement on the copy of the letter found among Mr. Jefferson's papers, or whether the mistake is that of the editor, I know not.

It may not be improper to add that the copy of the Kentucky resolutions sent by Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Madison on November 17, 1798, and the copy found among Mr. Jefferson's papers, consist of eight resolutions; those adopted by the Kentucky Legislature of nine; and that there are several differences in language and form of expressions:

"MONTICELLO, December 11, '21.

"DEAR SIR: Your letter of December 19 places me under a dilemma which I cannot solve, but by an exposition of the naked truth I would have wished this rather to have remained as hitherto without inquiry, but your inquiries have a right to be answered. I will do it as exactly as the great lapse of time and a waning memory will enable me. I may misremember indifferent circumstances, but can be right in substance. At the time when the Republicans of our country were so much alarmed at the proceedings of the Federal ascendancy in Congress, in the Executive and the Judiciary departments, it became a matter of serious consideration how head could be made against their enterprises on the Constitution; the leading Republicans in Congress found themselves of no use there; brow-beaten as they were by a bold and overwhelming majority, they concluded to retire from that field, take a stand in their State Legislatures, and endeavor there to arrest their progress. The Alien and Sedition Law furnished the particular occasion. The sympathy between Virginia and Kentucky was more cordial and more intimately confidential than between any other two States of Republican policy. Mr. Madison came into the Virginia Legislature I was then in the Vice-Presidency, and could not leave my station; but your father, Col. W. C. Nicholas, and myself, hap-

act, formulated for the first time that distinct theory of our constitutional government, upon which the election of Jefferson in 1801 was secured, and which for three-score years was accepted by the dominant party of the country. Under that theory the era of good will under Madison and Monroe became possible.

The first of that celebrated series has been so often the subject of earnest discussion and fierce denunciation, that the remaining eight of them have been forgotten. Whatever may be the errors contained in this instrument, if indeed there be any, it is a most masterly composition. The fundamental general principles it announces as applicable to all times and all questions are: that confidence everywhere is the parent of despotism; that all governments possess only such powers as are bestowed, all others being reserved in

pening to be together, the engaging the co-operation of Kentucky in an energetic protestation against the constitutionality of those laws became a subject of consultation. Those gentlemen pressed me strongly to sketch resolutions for that purpose, your father undertaking to introduce them to that Legislature, with a solemn assurance, which I strictly required, that it should not be known from what quarter they came. I drew and delivered them to him, and in keeping their original secret he fulfilled his pledge of honor. Some years after this Col. Nicholas asked me if I would have any objection to it being known that I had drawn them. I pointedly enjoined that it should not. Whether he had unguardedly intimated it before to any one I know not, but I afterwards observed in the papers repeated imputations of them to me, on which, as has been my practice on all occasions of imputation, I have observed entire silence. The question, indeed, has never before been put to me nor should I answer it to any other than yourself, seeing no good end to be proposed by it, and the desire of tranquility inducing with me a wish to be withdrawn from public notice. Your father's zeal and talents were too well known to desire any additional distinction from the penning these resolutions. That circumstance surely was of far less merit than the proposing and carrying them through the Legislature of his State. The only fact in this statement on which my memory is not distinct, is the time and occasion of the consultation with your father and Mr. Nicholas. It took place here I know, but whether any other person was present or communicated with is my doubt. I think Mr. Madison was either with us or consulted, but my memory is uncertain as to minute details. I fear, dear sir, we are now in such another crisis, with this difference only, that the judiciary branch is alone and single-handed in the present assaults on the Constitution; but its assaults are more sure and deadly, as from an agent, seemingly passive and unassuming. May you and your cotemporaries meet them with the same determination and effect as your father and his did the "Alien and Sedition" laws, and preserve inviolate a Constitution which, cherished in all its chastity and purity, will prove in the end a blessing to all the nations of the earth. With these prayers, accept those for your own happiness and prosperity.

"TH. JEFFERSON.

"For J. CABELL BRECKINRIDGE, Frankfort, Ky."

and by the people; that the Constitution of State and United States is the measure of the powers bestowed, and not the discretion of the government; that if the *discretion* of the government be the measure of its powers, then that government is a despotism; that the Federal Constitution was a compact entered into by the States by which a government was created, all of whose powers were delegated powers, and contained in that compact, and that of necessity the parties to that compact were the sole judges, each for itself, of infractions thereof, and the redress therefor. To these universal principles were added the denunciation of the particular acts under consideration, and the reasons why Kentucky believed them to be unconstitutional.

At the next session of the Legislature, 1799, John Breckinridge became Speaker, and in Committee of the Whole, Joseph Desha being Chairman of the Committee, offered the resolutions of 1799, of which he was the undisputed author, which were *unanimously* adopted; and at this very session, doubtless, in additional indorsement of these cherished views, the Legislature created this county, and made it a memorial of its esteem and admiration for that Speaker.

The men of whom the Legislatures of 1798 and 1799 were constituted had already acquired and always thereafter retained the confidence and affection of the State. They had been among her soldiers and leaders in the past twenty-five years. Upon them she showered every honor in her gift until that generation gave place to another.

Alexander Scott Bullitt had been President of the Senate since the admission of the State into the Union, and became her first Lieutenant Governor, and he was succeeded as Lieutenant Governor by John Caldwell, and he by Gabriel Slaughter, and he by Richard Hickman, and he in turn again by Gabriel Slaughter, who, by the death of George Madison, became Governor, and gave place to his old colleague in the House, John Adair, who was followed by that Joseph Desha, who, as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, reported the resolutions of 1799 to the House.

In the meantime John Breckinridge had become Senator, as had John Adair and Buckner Thurston, the old clerk of the Senate, and Christopher Greenup Governor, and to both sets of resolutions had the honored name of James Garrard been affixed.

This is indeed a galaxy of stars to be placed in the crown of our State's glory. Garrard, Bullitt, Edmund Bullock, Adair, Slaughter, Caldwell, Hickman, Greenup, McClung; Russell, who followed Campbell and Shelby up the steep acclivity where Ferguson died; Desha, whose grandfather fell by the Indians in Tennessee, and whose childhood was spent amidst all perils, and who lived to share in the triumph of the Thames; Robert Johnson, the noble root from which has sprung a noble stock; Green Clay, surveyor, legislator, soldier, whose descendants have deserved well of their country. From the members of those Legislatures the State chose four Governors, four Lieutenant Governors, at least two Senators, and many Congressmen, judges, legislators.

The godfathers, my countrymen, of your venerated county, deserve your veneration and gratitude; no royal infant was ever surrounded at its birth with a more imposing circle; around no cradle ever gathered a nobler group, who loved liberty, bowed in obedience to order, loved their race, and feared God.

During the fierce discussions of these obnoxious laws, and the heated Presidential election, Kentucky never for one moment lost sight of the purpose to own the Mississippi. By every possible means this was kept before Congress, and made the chief object of her servants in the Federal Congress. It was because Jefferson was known to share in these views that made him so beloved in Kentucky, and filled all her borders with joy when the news of his election came; and in 1803 she saw the consummation of these labors. Not until the garrets of our old families are searched, and the old moth-eaten papers examined and weighed, will the true share of Kentucky statesmen in the

glory of the purchase and annexation of Louisiana be known.

These resolutions of Kentucky, adopted in 1798 and 1799, were the platform of the Jeffersonian party, the first formulated party platform in the history of American politics. Upon them that election turned. It is not saying too much that the re-election of Mr. Adams, and the continuance of the Federal party in power at that juncture of public affairs, would have postponed, if not prevented, the purchase and annexation of Louisiana—nay, would have changed the policy of America on that subject. Let this be put to the credit of this platform, and the State who gave it her solemn legislative and executive indorsement; that its first-fruits were the dawning of the era of renewed fraternal feeling, the awakening in Kentucky and the Southwest of an earnest and passionate love for the Union, and the annexation of the father of waters, and all the unrivaled valley, watered by its tributaries.

The election of Jefferson made negotiation with France on this subject possible. With surprise did we receive the offer to purchase it; and for a moment constitutional scruples on the part of the President hindered; but this hesitation continued but for a moment. Although he believed that under that Constitution there had been given no power to the General Government to acquire new territory, he determined to act, and then appeal to the States to render the act legal by a constitutional amendment. Under his instructions Monroe closed the treaty, and Louisiana—that superb and magnificent country, now teeming with its millions of freemen, and fast becoming the very centre of power—became part of free America. At last the dream of the pioneer was realized, and from the Big Sandy to the Gulf the glad waters laved only friendly shores and yielded their fruitful bosoms to the commerce of the West.

But there remained the unsettled question, "Was annexation of territory extra-constitutional?"

When we estimate what we have since annexed—Florida, Texas, California, the territories growing into States—we know how momentous the solution of this problem was. If new territory could be acquired only through the slow and doubtful process of constitutional amendment, all future annexation became doubtful if not impossible. John Breckinridge was now Senator, and Jefferson selected him as the mover of the proper constitutional amendment. That amendment, in Mr. Jefferson's own handwriting, as sent by him to John Breckinridge, I now hold in my hand. It is :

Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, two-thirds of both Houses concurring, that the following amendment to the Constitution of the United States be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, which, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, shall be valid to all intents and purposes as a part of the said Constitution.

“Louisiana, as ceded by France to the United States, is made a part of the United States.”

But not even the great influence of Jefferson could persuade his friends that the United States could not by treaty acquire new territory, and that if there were doubts, those doubts ought to be forever removed by this precedent. These views prevailed, and to-day it is no idle boast that but for Kentucky the precedent might have been settled precisely the other way, and sanctified with the illustrious name of Jefferson. If it had, who believes that Texas and the golden slopes on the Pacific would to-day form part of our dear country, and share with us the glorious privilege of working out the problem of American liberty? *

Here I close this review of the pioneer work of Kentucky. Here began a new era in the development of Amer-

* I add a note from Mr. Jefferson to John Breckinridge, dated August 18, 1803:

“MONTICELLO, August, 18, '03.

“DEAR SIR: I wrote to you on the 12th inst. on the subject of Louisiana and the constitutional provision which might be necessary for it. A letter received yesterday shows that nothing must be said on that subject which may give a pretext for retracting; but that we should do, *sub silentio*, what shall be found necessary. Be so good, therefore, as to consider that part of my letter confidential; it strengthens the reasons for desiring the presence of every friend to the treaty on the first day of the session. Perhaps you

ica. It was now settled that territories could be transformed into States; that equal representation and universal suffrage were compatible with order and constitutional government; that the Constitution, not the discretion of those who were in temporary control of the Government, was the measure of the powers bestowed; that the powers of the General Government were delegated and limited powers; that the Union formed by the Constitution was a Union of States, into which Union new States could be admitted on equal footing with the old; and that this Union had the power of indefinite expansion by the annexation of territory to be carved into States. The dream of the fathers had indeed been fulfilled. As the survivors of the dark and doubtful days from 1770 to 1783 recalled those anxious forecastings, and then looked around them on what had been accomplished, what emotions of grateful joy must have overflowed their hearts.

I have desired, as my contribution to this memorial day, to put together some scattered evidences of the part the pioneers of Kentucky, and the statesman after whom your county is named, played in securing these glorious results. I trust I have not overstepped the bounds of propriety in my utterances concerning that statesman.

can impress this necessity on the Senators of the Western States by private letter. Accept my friendly salutations and assurances of great respect and esteem.

‘ TH. JEFFERSON.

“J. BRECKINRIDGE, Esq.”

To those who are familiar with this subject, the proposed amendment differs from those suggested by Mr. Jefferson in his letter to Mr. Madison of August 25, 1803 and to Levi Lincoln in his letter of August 30, 1803. His letter to Mr. Breckinridge of August 12, 1803, did not inclose this proposed amendment.

The manuscript correspondence of Mr. Monroe and Mr. Breckinridge show that this whole subject was anxiously discussed by them before Mr. Monroe went to Europe, and during his stay there; and the manuscript correspondence between William Cary Nicholas and John Breckinridge show their agreement as to the proposed amendment.

I ought to state that I had at one time come to the conclusion that the paper read in the address was really written in April, 1800, while Mr. Breckinridge was Attorney General; that while Jefferson yielded to his friends in 1803, he had not been convinced, and desired to renew the subject after his party had become stronger; and there are some facts which seem to establish this. I have no doubt that there were, and probably still are, private papers in existence which would conclusively settle this point.

Here to-day, at a memorial service, conducted under the auspices of the Breckinridge Centennial Association, well may many ask who was this John Breckinridge, after whom this beautiful county was named? I dare not venture to answer that question myself. Another more eloquent than I, who, himself, deserved well of his State, asked and answered that question years ago. His answer was:

Who was John Breckinridge? I have heard of a man of that name who, being left at a very tender age an orphan boy of slender means and delicate constitution, contrived, no one could tell how, in one of the frontier counties of Virginia, to make himself an accurate and elegant scholar by the time of life at which most youths of the best opportunities are beginning to master the outposts of learning. I have heard that he turned this early and unusual school craft to such account, and mixed his love of learning with a spirit of such unconquerable energy, that with his rifle on his shoulder and his surveying implements in his hands, he scoured the frontiers of his native State, exposed every hour to death by savage warriors, that with the price of his toil and almost of his blood, he might purchase what he valued above the body's life—the means of life to the spirit—that enchanting knowledge for which his heart panted.

Old men have told me, and their eyes have filled with tears as they dwelt on the name of the beloved lad, that when he had left his mountain home for the ancient institution of Williamsburg, eagerly bent on knowing what he might, and while yet a minor, his native county appalled him by an order to represent her interests and honor in the legislative halls of the most renowned of our Commonwealths; and I have heard that from that day forward, for a period of six and twenty years, he lived continually in the public eye, until 1806 he was prematurely cut off in the very flower of his manhood, and when the richest fruits of such a life were only beginning to ripen.

As an advocate, the mention of his name, even in remote connection with that of Patrick Henry, who was still in his meridian splendor when the young backwoodsman met him at the bar, is enough to prove that from the start the goal was in his reach. As a lawyer, learned, great, and full of strength, the man who was the constant rival of George Nicholas, and out of all other professional comparison, and who, when just turned of forty, and at a period of our history when distinguished merit was an indispensable requisite for high office, became Attorney General of the United States, had name enough. As a politician, the leader of the first Democratic Senate that ever met under the present Government of the United States, the compeer of Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, and their confidential friend, the author of the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798, which constituted the earliest and the boldest movement of that great era, and which were drawn with such consummate ability that Mr. Jefferson con-

sidered it too great an addition to his fame to be reputed their author, ever openly to deny it, may justly be called great.

As a statesman, the present Constitution of Kentucky, of which he, more than any man, was the undoubted author, and which the people of that State, after a trial of more than forty years, refuse to alter; the Criminal Code of that State the most humane that exists, and which in its great outlines is the work of his hands; the opposition to Jay's treaty; the securing the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi, the subsequent purchase of Louisiana, and the incalculable influence of these events upon the destinies of this great nation—ideas which the proof is complete had their origin in those Democratic societies of the West of which he and that far-sighted patriot, George Nicholas, were the life and soul—place him in the very front rank.

Of the private life of this man, I have heard a character still more remarkable. Simple in his manners, grave and lofty in his carriage, self-denied in his personal habits, and a stranger to the common wants and infirmities of man, no efforts were too great, no labors too immense, no vigils too protracted, no dangers too imminent, no difficulties too insurmountable for his great, concentrated, indomitable energies. And yet this firm and earnest spirit and this vigor almost austere were tempered by a gentleness towards those he loved, so tender that the devotion of his friends knew no bounds; and directed by a frankness and generosity towards all men, so striking and absolute, that even those he could not trust, trusted him. If men have told me truth, his was a life from beginning to end most imposing and illustrious; a character in all respects noble and pure. He was a man whom all noted while he walked amongst them, and when he fell all men mourned.

In 1800 Kentucky had a population of 220,985, and in 1810 of 406,511, and had increased with even greater proportionate rapidity in wealth and the luxuries which wealth brings. She had led in all literary and religious movements. She had outgrown the old days of her pioneer struggles, and had settled all those scores but one. The ancient enemy was yet unconquered.* They who led the bands against the log stations in the virgin cane, whose scalping-knives had been bloody with precious blood, who filled Kentucky with universal mourning for the slain of Blue Lick—the story of which tragic disaster has been so lately told in eloquent prose and stately poetry—were yet the allies of Great Britain. This debt, made thousand-fold greater by the dead of Tippecanoe and the slain of Raisin river, was paid at the Thames, where Tecumseh fell, and at New Orleans,

where British valor broke its waves on the cotton bulwarks of Western soldiery.

Here we pause; for in the war of 1812 only a few of old pioneers—Nestors like Shelby—took part. A new race of men were in power. The age of the pioneer was ended; the era of the settler had passed. It is of their era and of their work alone that I desire to speak, and for that reason, in part, I have not ventured into the inviting field of the local history of this county. A graceful pen, however, has put on record this chapter of Kentucky history. A more fascinating chapter of the tragic and romantic days of the Indian fighter has never been written than that we have this day listened to. I know this vast audience unites with me in the urgent request that he bring it down to to-day. But there is one episode that is so touching that I cannot refrain from an allusion to it. Rich, indeed, must be the commingled blood of Benjamin Logan, John Allen, and John Crittenden; and he whose heart was warmed with its pulsations must be easily touched by any tale of oppression, and eager to take any risk to give aid. In the youthful ear of a gallant scion of these families were poured stories of Spanish oppression, and of Cuban yearning to be free; and with all the ardor of his nature, and all the bravery of his sires, he embarked in that disastrous expedition to Cuba. And in the plaza at Havana, with unblanched face, he refused to kneel, saying, with the chivalric mingling of the thought of God and woman, the sweet, reverent intertwining of worshipful love for God and mother and sweetheart that marked the tender but heroic crusader, “a Kentuckian kneels to none but God and his sweetheart,” he gave his life to his murderers. The comrades who fought under his command, and died at his side under that murderous fire, were worthy to die with him—to them death brought no fear. If misguided, they paid the penalty with their lives; and never, under the Cid or by the side of the cavalier who drove the crescent before the cross, fought or died more knightly crusaders. That Kentucky blood sanctifies that Cuban plaza,

and in the days to come, some English-speaking orator will, on that very spot, recount the sad and melting story.

I venture to add, that the children of these pioneers have been worthy of their sires. Buena Vista and Mexico, the sad but glorious fields of the late unhappy war, bore imperishable testimony that those who fell at Kings Mountain and conquered at Yorktown, who wrestled with Indian foe and died at Blue Licks, were no braver men or stouter soldiers than their grandsons who fell with their feet to the foe and their faces to heaven.

And as the foundation and development of the States of the West and the Southwest and of the Pacific slope are told, familiar Kentucky names fall on our pleased ears; and the sons, like the fathers, are builders of States. My countrymen, this is the peculiar destiny of our race. As I recall all Kentucky has done for mankind and liberty, and realize all she is to-day, my heart thrills with thanksgiving that my lot was cast with her. But it is not because my horizon is limited by her eastern hills or western river; nay, but because I take in the wide sweep of my contemplation the leadership that our race has in the world's progress, and for my country we claim the head of that column.

As I look once more at the universal map, and see what part Great Britain and America bear in all that adds to the good of man and gives glory to God; as I try to imagine what added power will be given by another hundred years to this English-speaking race, I rejoice that our State and our kinsmen have done their full share in all of the past, and are doing it in the present. A pure, yet free religion, liberty regulated by law, order protected by the love of the free, chaste homes where open Bibles and virtuous women shed the blended radiance of heaven and earth on the children of those who have conquered every foe who opposed the onward march of these lofty and pervasive ideas—these conservative and peaceful influences, these irresistible agencies for good—give assurance that the future of this race will be fruitful in blessing.

Already America is conquered by this tongue; the ancient prejudices and older religions of India are quietly melting before the steady heat of English justice; Australia, like a young giant, is striding towards empire; in Africa the heaven has been hid in the weighty measures of meal. The subtle force of this civilization is making itself felt in China. It is a civilization and a language worthy of leadership.

We are no longer pioneers: we are not called to their work. But every day has its own problems, every era its own questions, every State its own labors.

We are not called to deeds of blood, of rude combat in forest; but the struggle is as real, the combat is as dangerous. All lead or follow. Leadership is not by accident nor to the weak; mastery comes not to the slothful nor to the cowardly. Kentucky can be towards the head—nay at the head, of this onward marching column of American States. To do this, her mines must be opened, her mountains tunneled, her rivers bridged, her waste land tilled; still more, law must reign supreme in her borders, education be honored in her children, religion be obeyed in her homes. Rich in her natural resources, richer in the fame of her sons and the traditions of her past, still richer in the qualities of her people, Kentucky this day turns her face from the Past to the rising sun of the Future, and with glad, brave heart enters into the life that lies before her. And we, her children, with proud thanksgiving for that Past, and with tender love for our mother Commonwealth, do here, on this holy ground, sanctified by patriot blood and womanly sacrifice, conscious of the invisible presence of the shades of the heroic dead, re consecrate ourselves to the service of the State, to the supremacy of law, to the preservation of a true liberty, to the weal of a compacted Union, and to the progress of a common race, appealing to the Searcher of Hearts, who doeth His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, to attest the sincerity of our vow, and for His omnipotent aid.

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